		SOP #	123.01
	Portales Police Department	Date Revised:	
	Standard Operating Procedure & Policy	ADM. #	23.01 23.02 23.03
1700 N. Boston St. Portales NM, 88130	Public Information	Effective Date	
(575) 356-4404		Approval:	Pat Gallegos, Chief of Police

I.   STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Positive press relations are an integral part of the operation of any public service agency; the Portales Police Department is no exception. Most citizens have little contact with law enforcement officers and their opinion of the police is often formed by the mass media's portrayal of its functions. The maintenance of good press relations is therefore a crucial element of public relations. Officers and employees must maintain good rapport with the media and deal with them in a courteous and impartial manner. It must be remembered that the media has a legitimate function in our society and the public trust of the police can be enhanced through proper dealings with the media.

II.   PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

A.   The designated Public Information Officers for the Department are assigned by the Chief of Police.

B.   The Public Information Officer is responsible for:

1.   Coordinating and authorizing the release of information;
2.   Being available for on-call responses to the media;
3.   Preparing and distributing department news releases;
4.   Responding to requests for scheduled news conferences and interviews;
5.   Assisting in crisis situations within the agency.

C.   In the absence of the Chief of Police, public information responsibility will fall to the Deputy Chief and then the Lieutenant.

IV. NEWS MEDIA REQUIREMENTS AND PRIVILEGES

A.   Members of the media may not resist, obstruct or otherwise interfere with an officer in the lawful execution of his duty. The mere presence of a member of the media, the taking of pictures or the asking of questions does not constitute interference.

B. Officers shall not restrict the movement of members of the media, unless their actions clearly and directly interfere with police functions or investigations.

   1. Still photographs or film footage may be taken in or from any area which media members have been given access. Officers may restrict the use of flash, strobe or high intensity lighting when such illumination might hinder a police operation.

C. Department personnel shall not compel prisoners to pose for photographs or film footage. However, officers are not to interfere with photographers or cameramen photographing or filming prisoners from public access areas.

D. Members of the media are not exempt from any federal law, state law, or any local ordinance. They are dealt with in the same manner as any other violator if arrested.

E. No member of the media shall have any property confiscated, nor be threatened with confiscation, without due process of law. This includes camera, film, notes, etc.

F. Because most of the media maintain a police scanner and are aware of our calls, they shall be allowed to call the Communications Center and calls will be transferred to The Chief of Police during normal business hours. After normal business hours the calls will be transferred to the Public Information Officer's voice mail.

   1. The Department will not initiate calls to the media except official news releases.

G. Any employee who experiences difficulties in dealing with individual member of the media at the scenes of incidents or during telephone contact should report such by memorandum to the Public Information Officer or the Chief of Police.

V. CRIME SCENES, CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND CATASTROPHIC EVENTS

The fact that a person is a member of the media does not give them special privileges when responding to, or reporting from, a scene.

It shall be the responsibility of the P.I.O. to coordinate the activities of the media at the scene of an event which is under the control of department personnel. It is also the responsibility of the P.I.O. to establish and maintain good rapport with the media.

VI. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

    A. In cases of a death, the name of the deceased shall not be released by department personnel until next of kin has been notified.

    B. Release of information will be in compliance with the Department access to Police Records policy.

    C. All employees shall familiarize themselves with the 'Access to Police Records' policy to ensure any release of information meets those guidelines.

    D. If any questions arise concerning the release of certain information, the Custodian of Records shall be contacted.

VII. MUTUAL OPERATIONS

    A. Any request for information on incidents involving actions initiated by another agency is referred to that agency.

    B. Incidents initiated by the Department with assistance from another agency are handled under the provisions of this policy.

VIII. CHANGES IN NEWS MEDIA POLICY

The Chief or Police or the Public Information Officers meet periodically with members of the news media to discuss any changes and to request input.

IX. INSPECTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

All requests to view and/or obtain copies of records shall be done pursuant to the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act.

    A. The Records Custodian/Clerk shall be the primary recipient for Public Records requests.

        1. Any requests that are unusual or outside normal requests for incident or crash reports shall be reviewed by the Lieutenant or Chief of Police prior to any dissemination.

        2. Time limits for production of requested records shall be in accordance

with current NMIPRA regulations.

3. Charges for records shall meet the requirements set forth by NMIPRA and the City of Portales.

    a. Standard charges are $3 for initial reports and $1 for each additional page.

    b. CDs shall be $5 and DVD's shall be $10 each.

    c. Lengthy requests shall be charged additional fees that shall be determined prior to the completion of the request and the requestor shall be notified prior to the completion of the request.

    d. Any audio or video that requires redaction shall be additionally charged fees.

4. Information may be withheld in accordance with NMIPRA regulations.